

**The Ombudsman Association  
Code of Ethics**

*The ombudsman, as a designated neutral, has the responsibility of maintaining strict confidentiality concerning matters that are brought to his/her attention unless given permission to do otherwise. The only exceptions, at the sole discretion of the ombudsman, are where there appears to be imminent threat of serious harm.*

*The ombudsman must take all reasonable steps to protect any records and files pertaining to confidential discussions from inspection by all other persons, including management.*

*The ombudsman should not testify in any formal judicial or administrative hearing about concerns brought to his/her attention.*

*When making recommendations, the ombudsman has the responsibility to suggest actions or policies that will be equitable to all parties.*

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The Ombudsman Association.

LALP-97-135

**Contact Numbers, Office Hours, and Location**

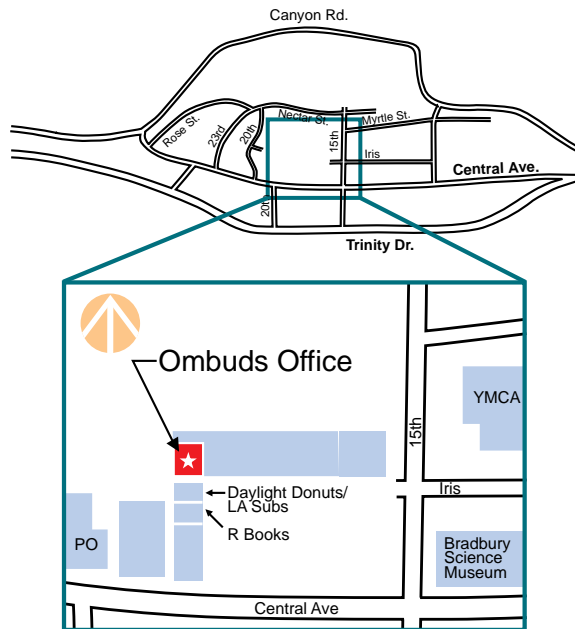
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Regular office hours are 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.,  
Monday through Friday. Special appointment  
hours may be arranged if necessary.

*The Ombuds Program office is located at  
974 17th Street in Central Park Square in  
downtown Los Alamos.*



**Los Alamos**  
NATIONAL LABORATORY

## Mission

*The mission of the Ombuds Program is to enhance the overall productivity of the Laboratory by providing a confidential and impartial alternative for assistance with informal complaint resolution, problem solving, and communication.*

*The Ombudsman supports the Laboratory's Guiding Principles and is committed to the fair and equitable treatment of all employees.*

## What Does Ombudsman Mean?

The word *ombudsman* comes from Scandinavia where the concept of appointing a neutral person to address citizen complaints about the government was developed almost 200 years ago. Since the 1970s, the role has evolved to include workplace ombudsmen (and women) who assist employees.

## What Is the Ombuds Program?

The Ombuds Program offers assistance in resolving work-related concerns informally, confidentially, and impartially. The services of the Ombudsman do not replace formal complaint processes or other channels of problem resolution; rather, these services complement other Laboratory resources.

## Who May Use the Ombuds Program Services?

The Ombudsman is available to anyone in the Laboratory workforce, including managers and special employment program participants. The Ombudsman also assists Laboratory organizations in addressing issues and developing positive strategies for meeting workplace challenges.

## What Does an Ombudsman Do?

The Ombudsman is a *designated neutral* who listens, answers questions, provides and receives information, suggests referrals, and helps develop options for resolving conflicts or concerns. While the Ombudsman may assist through various dispute resolution techniques, the emphasis is on exploring ways for individuals to help themselves. No solutions are imposed, and you retain control of your options.

The Ombudsman adheres to the Ombudsman Association Code of Ethics and applies recognized professional methods to encourage communication, teaming, collaboration, and creativity among the workforce.

*The Ombuds Program offers an alternative if you*

- Need advice about how to deal directly with your concern.
- Are uncertain about taking a problem through other established channels.
- Are not sure who to talk to about your concern or problem.
- Want an informal, nonescalating approach.
- Need a fresh, impartial perspective.
- Simply want to discuss strategies or possible options for resolving your concern.
- Want to maintain the greatest possible flexibility in how you approach your concern.

## Is The Ombuds Program Confidential?

To the maximum extent provided by law, issues you bring to the Ombudsman are treated with strict confidentiality. No action is taken without your permission and no formal written records are kept. Exceptions to confidentiality may occur *only* when disclosure is ordered by an appropriate legal authority, such as a court, or when there is reason to believe that failure to disclose information could result in serious harm to a person or to property.

## To Whom Does the Ombudsman Report?

The Ombuds Program is part of the Laboratory Director's Office. Without breaking confidentiality, the Ombudsman shares general trends with the Laboratory Director or other Laboratory officials with a need to know in order to improve operations. In this way, the Ombudsman helps to identify workplace concerns and suggests improvements.